N° 74. SATURDAY, *July* 1, 1786.

IT is a well known conſolation to diſtreſs, to be told of the like infelicity which others endure. Perhaps, therefore, my late correſpondent *Mr. Eaſy* may not be diſpleaſed to read the following letters, which will ſhow him, if the relations of my correſpondents are to be relied on, that matches of love, as well as of prudence, may have their diſadvantages; that a wife's affection, as well as her œconomy, may impriſon a man's perſon, may exclude him from his beſt ſociety, and abridge his moſt innocent amuſements.

To the LOUNGER.

SIR,

IT was my misfortune to loſe my father in a few months after I came into the world. He was a gentleman of family in the county of ——, where he poſſeſſed a moderate fortune, and had married my mother not much above a year before his death. When ſhe was thus deprived of her huſband, ſhe had not finiſhed her twentieth

tieth year, and possessed an uncommon share of beauty, heightened and improved by every graceful accomplishment. Warmly attached to my father, she found no relief from her sorrows, as I have often heard her say, but in those cares, and in that attention which it was necessary to pay to me in my infancy. As I grew up, I became the sole object of my mother's solicitude, and she transferred to me all the affection which she had borne to my father. I was not ungrateful for all this kindness; and in my mother I found not only a parent whom I respected, but a friend whom I loved; one to whom I was accustomed to unbosom myself with perfect freedom and confidence. Except a few years, which on account of my education we passed in town, we resided chiefly at the family-seat in the country. As we saw but few company, much of our time was spent in reading, which indeed came to be our favourite amusement. My mother's taste in books coincided entirely with mine. Though we sometimes read a little history, yet novels were our favourite amusement; and though my mother possessed taste enough to admire the elegance of a *Robertson*, and the simplicity of a *Hume*, yet we read such authors as a sort of task, from which we returned with pleasure to the delightful page of a *Richardson*, or *Riccoboni*. In this charming

charming ſolitude my days glided ſweetly along, and I never formed a wiſh to quit the ſociety of my beloved mother, or to change the condition of my life. Before I had finiſhed my eighteenth year, propoſals of marriage had been made to me by ſeveral gentlemen of rank and condition. As it had ever been the avowed principle of my mother, that in that important particular a woman ought to be left at perfect freedom, ſhe upon every ſuch occaſion declined to give any opinion, telling me, that as the happineſs of my life was to depend upon the choice I ſhould make, I had only to conſult the dictates and feelings of my heart. Thus left by the tenderneſs of my mother to the freedom of my own will, I found no difficulty in giving an anſwer to my ſuitors. Reſpectable as they might be, they could not bear a compariſon with thoſe characters which I had been accuſtomed to love and to admire in my favourite authors; and it had long been my fixed opinion, that without a certain hallowed ſympathy of ſoul, a ſacred union of hearts, there was a degree not of indelicacy only, but of criminality, in forming the nuptial bond.

One day, as my mother and I were upon our way to pay a viſit at the houſe of a Lady in the neighbourhood, our road led us along the ſide of a river, whoſe high banks, covered with wood,

wood, formed a moſt romantic and delightful ſcene. While we were admiring the beauties of it, ſome accident ſcared our horſes on the very brink of a ſteep precipice; and in all likelihood the conſequence would have proved fatal, had not a gentleman at that inſtant come to our aſſiſtance, and reſcued us at the hazard of his own life. Charmed with the ſpirit of our deliverer, I had now time to examine him with a little more attention. In the bloom of youth, he poſſeſſed one of the fineſt forms I ever beheld, with a countenance animated and intereſting in the higheſt degree. Perhaps the little adventure which introduced him to us, diſpoſed me to view him at that moment with a partial eye. Little accuſtomed as I was to conceal the emotions of my mind, he muſt have been blind indeed, if he did not perceive that I was pleaſed at finding he was going to the ſame houſe where my mother and I intended to pay a viſit. If the firſt appearance of the ſtranger pleaſed me, his addreſs, and manner, and converſation, charmed me ſtill more. In a word, Sir, I found in him all the graces of a *Lovelace*, all the virtues and accompliſhments of a *Grandiſon*, all the ſentiment and tenderneſs of a *Lord Offory*. Sir W. Denham (for that was his name) appeared to me the moſt amiable man I had ever ſeen. I need not trouble you

with

with a recital of the progreſs of our acquaintance. Suffice it to ſay, that he made a complete conqueſt of my heart, and that I conſented to give him my hand.

Immediately after our marriage, we went to his family-ſeat in the country. There the tenderneſs and the attachment of my huſband ſeemed daily to increaſe. He lived but to gratify my wiſhes, and I fondly fancied myſelf the happieſt of woman-kind. Alas, Sir! what a cruel thing it is to have known felicity, and then to be plunged in wretchedneſs! I, Sir, am now as miſerable as once I was happy. Not to keep you in ſuſpence, I have loſt the affections of my huſband. Of this I have hourly the moſt mortifying and the moſt unequivocal proofs. The firſt ſymptom I diſcovered of an alteration in his ſentiments, was the pleaſure I found he took in other ſociety, and in amuſements of which I could not partake. When his country-neighbours come to viſit him, he will ſit a whole evening over his bottle with them, while I languiſh alone, neglected and forlorn. Nay, Sir, before we were many months married, he had the barbarity to leave me for a whole fortnight, which he ſpent in the Highlands, on a ſhooting party, as he called it. Not only does he prefer thoſe frivolous amuſements to me, but he even abandons my ſociety, on a pretence

that the management of his affairs requires it. At this moment he is at an eſtate he has in a diſtant county, where he ſays he will be detained by buſineſs for ſeveral weeks. What is buſineſs or affairs to me, who would with pleaſure have deſcended from a throne to make him happy!

I am perſuaded, Sir, you will enter into my diſtreſs, and feel the juſtice of my complaints. As my huſband is a conſtant reader of your paper, I hope that the picture of my ſituation may ſtrike him, and lead him to alter a conduct which I own I am unable longer to endure. Yours, &c.

LOUISA DENHAM.

SIR,

AT the age of twenty-two, I ſucceeded to a paternal eſtate of L. 2000. Soon after the death of my father, to whom I was indebted for an excellent education, I ſet out on my travels; and after making the Grand Tour, I returned to my native country at the age of twenty-ſix, and found myſelf poſſeſſed of a fortune more than ſufficient for my wiſhes, with a ſound conſtitution, a diſpoſition to enjoy all the pleaſures of ſociety, and a heart ſuſceptible of friendſhip and attachment. Soon after my return, a fortunate accident introduced me to the

the acquaintance of Miſs Louiſa M——. Although accuſtomed to ſee and to admire beauty, yet I could not help being forcibly ſtruck with that of Miſs M——. Beauty, however, tho' it may dazzle for a moment, ſeldom makes a laſting impreſſion on one who had ſeen ſo much of the world as I had. But there was ſomething at once intereſting in the looks and engaging in the manners of Louiſa, that attracted me with an irreſiſtible charm. Even her artleſs ſimplicity, and her ignorance of the world, rather pleaſed from its novelty; accuſtomed to the *coteries* of Paris, and the ſociety of women whoſe converſation, ideas, and manners differed little from that of the men with whom they lived, I was charmed with the *naiveté* of Louiſa. In her obſervations there was a remarkable delicacy and juſtneſs of thought, often, it is true, accompanied with a degree of romantic wildneſs and enthuſiaſm, which, ſo far from diſpleaſing, ſerved rather to throw an additional charm around her.

I ſoon found that I was not indifferent to Miſs M——; and having paid my addreſſes to her, was honoured with her hand. For ſome time after our marriage, I was completely happy; and would have continued ſo, were it not for one ſingle weakneſs in my Louiſa, which has occaſioned much uneaſineſs to us both, and will, I fear, if not corrected, embitter all our

future

future days. 'Tis of such a sort, Mr. Lounger, that I have no term by which to blame it; I can only describe it by instances. When I went home after my marriage, my neighbours naturally came to pay their compliments on the occasion. Although I sometimes would rather have dispensed with their presence, which I could not help feeling as an interruption to that happiness which I experienced in the conversation of my Louisa; yet common civility required that I should receive them with politeness. One day Sir George Hearty, an old friend of my father's, and ever warmly attached to the interest of our family, came to dine with me. As I knew that Sir George liked his bottle, I, though naturally averse to any approach to excess in the way of drinking, could not help indulging the good old man in a glass extraordinary. When we rose from table, I found my wife in her apartment dissolved in tears. Astonished and affected to the last degree, I inquired the cause with all the impatience of the most anxious solicitude. At length she, with a look of melancholy that distressed me to the soul, said, that she found no happiness in any society but mine; and that if I loved like her, I could find no pleasure but in her's.

Not long after, I received a letter from the son of an English nobleman, with whom I had

been educated at ſchool and at college, and with whom I had ever after lived in habits of the ſtricteſt friendſhip, putting me in mind of an engagement I had come under when laſt in London, to ſhow him ſome parts of the Highlands of Scotland, and to paſs ſome time with him there in growſe-ſhooting. I immediately made the neceſſary preparations for this excurſion, and not doubting that my wife would be happy to ſhow every mark of attention to the choſen friend of my youth, I wrote to him to haſten his journey to Scotland. When he arrived, it was with pain I obſerved that my Louiſa, ſo far from participating the joy I felt at the ſight of my friend, ſeemed to ſink in ſpirits in proportion as I was overjoyed on the occaſion.

I left her in a ſituation which diſtreſſed me at the time, and the reflection of which damped all the joy I ſhould otherwiſe have found in the ſociety of my friend. I ſhortened our excurſion, although I ſaw it rather diſappointed him, in order to get home as ſoon as poſſible. Inſtead of being received by my Louiſa with that pleaſure which I experienced in ſeeing her after this ſhort abſence, I found her ſtill oppreſſed with that melancholy in which I had left her. It is needleſs, Sir, to detain you with a detail of further particulars. In a word, I find that my wife conſiders my partaking in any amuſement,

ment, joining in any ſociety, or engaging in the moſt neceſſary and eſſential buſineſs, as a mark of want of attachment and affection to her. That romantic turn of mind, which at firſt charmed me ſo much, and which her natural good ſenſe has not enabled her to reſtrain within due bounds, leads her to ſee every object through a medium very remote from the occurrences of ordinary life. As ſhe is a reader of the *Lounger*, I beg you will favour us with a paper on the danger of encouraging this engaging ſort of deluſion, ſo apt to captivate a young and a virtuous mind, but which I find, from fatal experience, leads to much miſery and diſtreſs.—Yours, &c.

W. DENHAM.

It might be ſuppoſed, that the *Lounger*, who has ſomehow been led to confeſs himſelf a bachelor, would not be much diſſatisfied at receiving, in ſuch letters as the above and *Mr. Eaſy*'s, a ſort of teſtimony of the inconveniencies of marriage. He muſt however declare, that they afford him no kind of ſatisfaction; nor indeed do the complaints of thoſe correſpondents induce him to think at all unfavourably of that ſtate in which they have found the em-

barraſſments they deſcribe. Want of judgment in our choice, or ridiculouſly ſanguine expectations from what we poſſeſs, will, in every article of life, produce diſappointment and chagrin; and the ſituation from which the greateſt felicity may be drawn, muſt neceſſarily be that from which moſt uneaſineſs may ſpring. But the relations of misfortune are generally exaggerated. From *Mrs. Eaſy* I have received a letter, denying more than half of her huſband's aſſertions. My correſpondent *Alcander*'s relation on the other ſide of the queſtion, meets with perfect credit from me. I myſelf know ſeveral couples as happy as his *Euphanor* and *Almeria*; it is probably owing to the truth of its recital, that his letter ſeems to me not ſo well calculated for the entertainment of my readers, as thoſe which perhaps borrow a little from fiction, to furniſh out their diſtreſſes. The epiſtles of to-day, in particular, I have taken the liberty to read to ſome of the moſt creditable of my married acquaintance, who are unanimous in declaring the diſtreſs of which they complain to be perfectly out of nature.

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